Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

wing of the house serves the purpose. A midwife, a Santal woman of the profession, attends on the parturient woman with her elderly women-relatives. In cases of difficult delivery, *Ojha*s (exorcists) are summoned to perform rites so as to expel the ghosts, supposed to be creating difficulties.

When the child is born, the umbilical cord is severed by the midwife with a sharp iron weapon such as an arrow-blade. The baby is now bathed in tepid water and the navel-string buried near the main door of the room of its birth.

As regards ceremonial uncleanliness for the baby and its mother, the practice differs in different areas of Mayurbhanj. Some do not observe any segregation whatsoever; while others observe it for varying periods[1] from one to twenty-one days, during which they may not visit the room, touch the baby or its mother. The observance of this birth-pollution in some areas and its negation in others, throws a flood of light on the influence of others on their customs and manners. During her confinement, the mother is allowed to eat warm rice with salt, leaves of

1. On this point, Nabin Mañjhi, an old Santal said that custom requires that twelve days should be observed. But it has slackened and men now sometimes consider themselves ceremonially clean, immediately after a child-birth in the house.

Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

843 dangling or her hair loose or any portion of her clothing hanging loosely from her body. She must not walk over the straw rope that is used for binding bundles in which grain is stored. She may not take any life nor may she look upon a dead body. It is not good to look on the image of a god at a temple or in the home of a Hindu neighbour. Is this due to the fact that although the image has the semblance of life it is dead? She must not weep when a death occurs. If there should be an eclipse of the moon she must remain indoors, and she must not look at the moon even from the shelter of the house. All these restrictions are ascribed by the Santals themselves to the need for escaping the attention of ghosts, the unsatisfied souls of the dead.

[827] Other actions are enjoined or prohibited because of their effect on the appearance or the character of the child who is to be born, and so illustrate the Santal reaction to the observed facts of heredity, the mysterious "law" which can be seen operating in the likeness of a child to its parents. Thunder is dangerous, and when the mother hears thunder she clasps close to her abdomen the cylindrical grinding stone used for the grinding of spices in the preparation of curry. By so doing she guards against her child growing up to be afraid of thunder. Turmeric roots, also used in the preparation of curry, are frequently forked. If the mother is cooking she does not break off a forked piece lest her child be born with forked fingers. If she sees an elephant her child may be born with large flapping ears. If she sees a monkey she fears lest her child will be born with the wide nostrils in a sunken nose that are a simian characteristic and one that is not uncommon among the Santals. If she sees a snake the child may develop the habit of constant spitting. Then again, the pregnant woman's taste in food must be humoured. If her whims are denied her child may grow up with a mouth always watering and be known as a "slobberer". These precautions furnish a useful means of determining many of the physical and mental characteristics that are displeasing to the Santals. One informant related a case that had occurred in his own family of a child who

[845] was born without an anus. The women of the village discussed the phenomenon and cast round for the reason. They put it down to the fact that the mother must at some time while she was pregnant have eaten the flesh of the flying fox, the reason being the belief that flying foxes are without this feature in their anatomy. In this case, which happened about forty years ago, the child was thrown away in the jungle while it was still alive.

5t Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

so, they are able to determine the sex of subsequent children 844
according to the place at which the cord is cut.

Special measures have to be taken when delivery proves to be 845
difficult. An *ojha* is called in if he lives at hand. He may resort to consulting the omens with leaf and oil, but if matters do not appear to be so serious he proceeds at once to prescribe treatment. One of his methods is to take a square of bark from a plantain tree in his right hand and to prick it repeatedly with a needle held in his left hand. Or a dagger is held upright over a brass drinking vessel and water is poured down the blade of the dagger, this water afterwards being given to the mother to drink. Another method is to tie a root to the mother's hair. It is important that the strand of hair to which the root is tied should be cut off as soon as the birth has taken place, lest she should lose her entrails as well. No men are admitted to the room where the birth is taking place, and the husband has to [593]
remain at hand in the courtyard. When the delivery is difficult he comes in for some chaffing or abuse according to the degree of difficulty. Some action of his at the time when conception occurred is held to be responsible. One of his duties is to keep by him the materials for lighting a fire in the room after the child is born. No fire is kept lit during the process of birth, but the fire [372]
lit immediately afterwards is used for providing a dry-heat massage for his wife's abdomen and for massage of the infant. As soon as the child is born, the women cry out the news to the 844
husband and any others in the courtyard, and the former takes a large stick with which he repeatedly beats the roof, crying out loudly at the same time to drive away any lurking ghosts. As soon as the floor has been cleaned and the mother is resting, the husband is admitted into the room. He then digs a hole in the floor with a ploughshare and in it he buries the afterbirth. It must not be buried directly beneath a rafter. The Santal does not talk of his "birthplace"; he refers to it as "the village where my afterbirth was buried".

One of the ceremonies that take place on the day that the 844
child is born appears to relate chiefly to the wellbeing of the 788
mother. She and the midwife sit facing each other on the floor of the house. The mother fills a leaf cup with distilled liquor and passes the cup to the midwife, who throws away its contents on her left side; this is repeated three times. The ceremony is known as *met' halan*, or "lifting the eye", and no Santal has been able to offer me an explanation of the custom. It may be ascribed to the necessity for taking precautions against the evil eye.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

553 cry like crows and kites! In that case we call an *ojha* to tell us
[756] the reason and we say to him: 'See what this child is up to; why
[787] does he cry?' The *ojha* asks for oil, reads the omens and then says: 'Such and such a dead relative is claiming that the child be named after him.' This usually happens when we want to name the child after someone on the mother's side. The dead ancestors on the father's side do not like to have it so." The above passage occurs in a part of his diary where Babulal was reporting the birth of twins, for whose naming there are special rules. Twins are known as *boiga* children, and their advent is not regarded as a misfortune. He continued his narrative: "Today the babies did not cry at all, for they were to have *boiga* names." One explanation is that *Marak Buru* had twelve sisters who were twins, and I have been told that the children of *Cando* were
551 twins. The pairs of names that are given to twins are drawn
• 845 from Hindu mythology and they are, for girls, Cita and Kapur, Dargi and Porgi, Hisi and Dhumni; boy twins are named Ram and Lokhon, Loba and Kisur, Cand and Bhaira, Sidhu and Kanhu. Most Santals when asked have denied categorically that dissimilar twins are posible. The only case met with in eleven years were twins born at the Mission Hospital in Sarenga, and it proved impossible to follow up their subsequent history.

551 The name given at the *chatiar* ceremony is known as the *bhitri antum*, which means literally the "inner" or "private" name. Everyone knows what his own inner name is, but it is little used by others. In addition to his private name each person receives at least one nickname, which is called the "upper" or "outer" name. This is necessary in part because of the prohibitions attaching to the use of names by certain categories of relations. If a boy has been named after one of his grandfathers, then all those who are prohibited by relationship from pronouncing the grandfather's name, e.g. the grandmother, are equally prohibited from applying that name to anyone else. Even those who could pronounce the name do not do so while the grandfather is alive, in order to avoid confusion. The nicknames given in early childhood do not remain fixed but are replaced by others as the boy grows up. Some result from the same kind of easy intimacy and teasing affection with which we are familiar in English society and are bestowed by those who stand in a [177] "joking" relationship with the boy. A new element has been introduced through the naturalization of many Hindu names, particularly among those Santals who have received some edu-